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BACCHYLIDES 17.86–90


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tάφεν δὲ Διὸς υἱὸς ἐνδοθέν
κέαρ, κέλευς τε ΚΑΤΟΥ-
ΠΟΝ ἵˇχεν εὐδαίδαλον
νάα· Μοῖρα δ’ ἐτέραν ἐπόρυν’ ὀδόν·
ˇέτο δ’ ὁκύπομπον δόρυ.

With one major exception, KATOYPON, the text is printed here as it appears in the
standard edition of Snell and Maehler. Interpretation of this passage is problematic. Is the
correct text in line 87f. κατ’ οὖρον (Kenyon and, apart from Festa, all subsequent editors)
or κάτουρον (Housman)? Does Minos order the ship to hurry on its course or does he order
it stopped? These questions are not trivial, for they affect how we understand Bacchylides'
treatment of Minos. Scholars have generally been eager to see Minos in a very harsh light,
and so have endorsed Kenyon's text and the reading of the passage that it necessitates. A
notable exception is Giesekam, who has argued persuasively for a more favourable view of
Minos in the poem. He has supported Housman's text, but his argument is brief and can be
supplemented in important ways. The issue hinges principally on two points, viz. the
precise force of ἵˇχεν, and the form and meaning of what the papyrus transmits as
KATOYPON. Also relevant is the significance of the ἐτέρα ὀδός of line 89.

On the usual view, κατ’ οὖρον is read, and the Doric infinitive ἵˇχεν is understood as
equivalent to ἵˇχελιν (cf. Jebb ad loc.). The resulting text is translated "[Minos] gave
command to keep the cunningly-wrought ship before the wind" (Jebb). Jebb cites, as
eamples of this alleged use of ἤˇχω for "steering a ship on a certain course," Od. 10.91,
ἐνθ’ ο’ γ’ είσο πάντες ἤˇχον νέας ἀμφισέλλας, and Hdt. 6.95, ἐνθέντεν δὲ οὐ πορά τὴν
ήπειρον εἰˇχον τὰς νέας ἰθὺ τοῦ τε Ἐλλησπόντου καὶ τῆς Θρήκης. Of these only the
second instance is relevant (though it is a more generalized reference than the passage under
discussion); in the Homeric passage ἤˇχον is used of bringing ships to anchor (in fact,
Privitera translates it in Heubeck's text by "arrestarono"). Consequently, there is no parallel
for the proposed usage in early poetry. Moreover, the assumption that ἵˇχεν stands for ἵˇχεν
in the sense required is dubious. In early texts meanings of ἤˇχω are almost always derived
from the basic sense "hold back, restrain." Furthermore, this is its meaning elsewhere in

1 B.Snell and H.Maehler, Bacchylidis: Carmina cum Fragmentis (Leipzig 1970). I have also printed
Μοῖρα with a capital letter, acknowledging the presence of the anthropomorphic figure: cf. Aesch. Cho. 911,
καὶ τόνδε τοῖνον Μοῖρ’ ἐπόρυμεν μόρον.
3 Cf. LSJ s.v.; G.C.Wakker, LfgrE s.v. ἰˇχω B, "aus (zurück)halten alle Verwendungen von ἵˇ erkläbar."
Accordingly, the basic meaning of the verb encourages a reading of the passage in which the ship is to be stopped.

κατ’ ὀψων is an obvious way to understand KATOYRON, especially since the papyrus appears to preserve a circumflex over the diphthong, although it must be stressed that diacritical marks in papyrus texts are in no way decisive.5 If this text is read and ἔχειν is understood in its basic sense, it might be tempting to translate "he gave the order to stay the ship that was before the wind." But without clearer articulation in the Greek a quasi-adjectival usage of the prepositional phrase is highly unlikely. Moreover, κατ’ ὀψων seems to occur in contexts in which motion is implied, and there is no example of a ship being stopped κατ’ ὀψων.6 Consequently, if we print κατ’ ὀψων, we shall be driven to understand ἔχειν as Jebb and most commentators do, however much this diverges from the normal semantic range of the verb.

Housman suggested another approach to the passage, arguing that κατουρον, not κατ’ ὀψων, is the correct reading, and translating "he ordered them to stop the ship, which was running before the wind."7 The adjective κατουρος is elsewhere unattested,8 but the formation is exactly parallel to ἐπουρος. As his translation indicates, Housman believes that κατουρος means "running before the wind." Jebb, however, objects: "But, even with κατουρον, the sense would be, 'to keep the ship before the wind': κατουρον could not stand for την κατ’ ὀψων πλέουσαν."9 It is clear that Jebb's position has been a decisive factor in banishing κατουρον to the apparatus of later editions, but I would argue that Jebb is wrong. Just as ἐπουρος is related to ἐπουροω/ἐπουριζω, so κατουροσ stands in a close relation to κατουρδω/κατουριζω. In each case the meaning of the adjective is determined by the semantic range of the verb. ἐπουροω/ἐπουριζω means "to blow onwards (i.e. favourably)" (cf. LSJ s.vv.), and so ἐπουρος is understood as "blowing

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6 Cf. Aesch. Pers. 481, Th. 690, 854; Soph. Tr. 468; Eur. And. 554; Hdt. 4.163.10; Arr. An. 7.20.6.3; Luc. Tox. 7.6. Hutchinson (on Aesch. Th. 690) remarks: "κατ’ ὀψων denotes impetuous speed."
7 A.E.Housman, CR 12 (1898) 139 = Classical Papers 2.462-463. This proposal won the support of a number of distinguished scholars in the years immediately following its publication: see Gieseckam (above n.2) 250 n.28. Particularly noteworthy is the approval of Wilamowitz (cf. his Bakchylides [Berlin 1898] 28, where he translates, "zu halten / gebot er das Schiff unter dem Winde"), and P.Maas, Die neuen Responsionsfreiheiten bei Bakchylides und Pindar 2 (Berlin 1921) 10f. Among editors only Festa (Florence 1916) 106f., has adopted the text. More recently, Gieseckam alone has supported Housman, but his arguments have not persuaded subsequent scholarship: the Teubner text is accepted without comment by A.P.Burnett, The Art of Bacchylides (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 17, 20; G.Jeramò, QS 30 (1989) 175. R.Scodel, Hermes 112 (1984) 139 n.8, draws attention to the issue, but supports Jebb's objections to Housman's text.
8 As Gieseckam (246) notes, this fact should trouble no one: a very large number of ἀπαξ λεγώμενα are attested in Bacchylides.
9 Jebb offered these same objections at greater length in CR 12 (1898) 154. Scodel (above n.7, 139 n.8) mistakenly supposes that Jebb objects to the syntax of Housman's proposal.
favourably" (cf. Soph. Tr. 954 with Kamerbeek's note; Clem. Alex. Paed. 1.7.54). The meaning of κάτουρος can be defined in the same way. The verbs mean "to sail before the wind" (cf. LSJ s.v.v.); moreover, it has been overlooked that Eustathius glosses κατουρίζειν with τὸ κατ’ ὦρον πλέειν (Comm. in II. 4.661.15 van der Valk). κάτουρος, then, is not an adjective formed directly from the phrase κατ’ ὦρον; consequently, Jebb was incorrect to say that the adjective could not mean τὴν κατ’ ὦρον πλέουσαν, for that is precisely what it should mean.

In light of the preceding discussion, we can conclude that Housman's κάτουρος coheres perfectly with the normal usage of ἰχθῦς: Minos orders the ship to be stopped. As Housman saw, κάτουρος picks up the opening passage of the poem (5-7):

\[
\text{τηλαγείη γὰρ [ὲν] φάρει}
\]

\[
\text{βορήματι πίτνον[ν] εὐραι}
\]

\[
\text{κλεισται ἐκτιτ π[ὲ]λευσιτὶδος Ἀθάν[ας]}
\]

After Theseus dives into the sea, Minos orders his crew to check the ship that has hitherto been sailing before the wind, but the gods, whose will and influence are much in evidence in the poem, do not allow it; the ship speeds on. In the face of the power of the gods the sea-lord of Cnossus is unable to stop his ship, for Moira has determined otherwise. On the usual reading of the passage, line 89 (Μοῖρα δ’ ἔτερον ἐπὸρευν’ ὀδόν) has seemed ambiguous: the ship is held to its course; the ἔτερον ὀδός then must be metaphorical, referring to the course of events, not to the course of the ship. But as Housman noted, the context suggests a more literal meaning for ὀδός, and this suits his reading of the passage: the course of the ship is different from that commanded by Minos.

With Housman's text, the villainy of Minos is minimized. And this is surely correct. Bacchylides does not present a crude conflict between a hero and a villain, but rather a clash between two heroes. On this sort of reading, we have a subtler and more interesting poem. It is also salutary to remember in this regard that the conflict between Achilles and Hector in the Iliad is no simple polarization.

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10 See J.Stern, RBPh 45 (1967) 40-47, for the careful balance between the opening and closing sections of the poem. Cf. more recently Ieranò (above n.7) 161.

11 I discuss this more fully in "The Power of Aphrodite: Bacchylides 17.10," Mnemosyne (forthcoming).

12 This is one of two examples of 'conscious ambiguity' in Bacchylides detected by R.F.Renehan, GRBS 10 (1969) 226. The other is Bacch. 16.30-35.

13 For a detailed exposition of this sort of view, see Giesekam (above n.2), especially 243f., on the careful delineation of Minos’ heroic stature in the poem.

14 I thank Professors R.L.Fowler, D.E.Gerber, and B.C.MacLachlan for commenting on this note in draft.